

Message Text

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46

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-10 ADP-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01

SS-15 IO-13 DPW-01 AID-20 OPR-02 OMB-01 SCS-03 SCA-01

FBO-01 A-01 OC-06 SY-10 USSS-00 CCO-00 RSR-01 /163 W

----- 130192

O R 201145Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5472

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMCONSUL UDORN

USDEL JEC PARIS

USIA WASHDC

SECDEF

USDAO SAIGON

DIRNSA FT GG MEADE MD

CINCPAC

CINCUSARPAC

COMUSMACTHAI

DEPCHJUSMAGTHAI

CINCPACFLT

CINCPACAF

CDR USSAG NKP

CDR 13 AF ADVON UDORN

388 TFW KORAT

DODSPECREP BANGKOK

DODSPECREP NKP

CHSPECATS BANGKOK

7 ACCS KORAT

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354 TFW KORAT RTAFB

56 SOW NKP
432 TRW UDORN
CDR JCRC NKP
8 TFW UBON
ARMA/AIRA VTN LAOS
ARMA/AIRA SVKT LAOS

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 5796

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD; 13 AF ADVON, 432 TFW, 56 SOW,
388 TFW, 354 TFW AND 8 TFW FOR DO/DI; MACTHAI FOR J-2 AND PAO

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, PINS, PFOR, LA
SUBJECT: LAO SITUATION REPORT -- 20 AUGUST 1973

REF: VIENTIANE 5751

1. VIENTIANE EXPERIENCED SHORT-LIVED COUP ATTEMPT TODAY, AUGUST 20, AS FORMER LAO AIR FORCE GENERAL THAO MA AND HIS ASSOCIATE COLONEL BOUNLEUT SAYCOCIE, WHO LED ABORTIVE COUP IN OCTOBER 1966, ATTEMPTED TO BRING DOWN SOUVANNA PHOUMA. THE ATTEMPT LASTED LESS THAN SIX HOURS WITH GENERAL MA BEING SHOT DEAD AT 1140 HOURS AND SOUVANNA STILL VERY MUCH IN CONTROL OF LAO SITUATION.
 2. COUP ATTEMPT BEGAN DURING EARLY HOURS OF AUGUST 20 AS REBEL FORCES(ESTIMATED TO NUMBER 20-30) CROSSED THE MEKONG FROM THAILAND INTO LAOS. THESE FORCES, JOINED BY PERHAPS ANOTHER 200, TOOK CONTROL OF PORTIONS OF WATTAY AIRPORT AT APPROXIMATELY 0500 HOURS AND, BY 0600, THEY WERE FLYING AT LEAST THREE CAPTURED RLAF T-28'S. FAR HEADQUARTERS AT CHINAIMO BORE THE BRUNT OF THE T-28 BOMBING AND STRAGING ATTACKS, WITH THREE SOLDIERS REPORTED KILLED, ONE WOUNDED. ANOTHER WAS KILLED ALONG THE ROAD TO WATTAY AIRPORT. EXCEPT FOR GENERAL MA, WE ARE AWARE OF NO REBEL CASUALTIES. BY MID-MORNING, FAR, UNDER MR V DEPUTY COMMANDER MOVED TO MUSTER ADEQUATE FORCE TO RETAKE AIRFILED, BRINGING T-28 THREAT TO END.
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3. AT APPROXIMATELY 0645 REBELS CAPTURED LAO NATIONAL RADIO STATION AND PROCEEDED TO BROADCAST A NUMBER OF STATEMENTS CALLING FOR THE PEOPLE TO JOIN AN UPRISING AGAINST SOUVANNA PHOUMA. STATION WAS RETAKEN MID-MORNING.
 4. SOUVANNA MOVED FROM HIS RESIDENCE TO US AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE, WHERE HE WAS JOINED BY DEFENSE MINISTER SISOUK AND OTHERS. AT NO TIME WAS SOUVANNA IN ANY PHYSICAL

DANGER.

5. NO AMERICAN CITIZEN WAS INJURED AND NO U.S. PROPERTY IS MISSING OR DAMAGED.

6. DURING ATTEMPTED COUP, CHARGE MOVED AROUND VIENTIANE MAKING IT ABSOLUTELY CLEAR TO PRIME MINISTER, INSURGENT LEADERS, RLG GENERAL STAFF, PATHET LAO REPRESENTATIVES, AS WELL AS MEMBERS OF DIPLOMATIC CORPS, THAT USG STOOD UNEQUIVOCALLY BEHIND PRIME MINISTER SOUVANNA.

7. BY NOON VIENTIANE WAS QUIET WITH ALL PREVIOUSLY CAPTURED FACILITIES, INCLUDING AIRPORT AND RADIO STATION, BACK IN FRIENDLY HANDS. MAIN RUNWAY AT WATTAY IS NOW OPEN AND WHILE VIENTIANE STREETS ARE LESS BUSY THAN USUAL, LIFE APPEARS TO BE RETURNING TO NORMAL.

8. RLG HAS ORDERED A 1900-0600 CURFEW.

9. IN LATE AFTERNOON ENTIRE DIPLOMATIC CORPS GATHERED AT PRIME MINISTER'S RESIDENCE TO CONGRATULATE SOUVANNA FOR SUCCESSFULLY TURNING BACK ATTEMPTED COUP.
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Message Attributes

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